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#### IV.—A TYPE OF BLANK VERSE LINE FOUND IN THE EARLIER ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

Some time ago in an article on *Lochrine and Selimus*<sup>1</sup> I showed the futility of discussing questions of the authorship and chronology of plays written between 1585 and 1595 on the evidence of parallel passages. I endeavored to show that the occurrence of such parallels is much more likely to be evidence of different authorship than of common authorship. If, now, this kind of evidence, by itself, is to be considered of small value, where shall we look for other evidence that may have more weight and certainty? I believe that something of significance can be found if we search carefully for characteristics of style,—forms of expression more or less rhetorical, peculiar arrangement of terms, favorite collocations of words, devices to “bum-bast out” the blank verse.

Evidence of this nature concerning only one characteristic of style will, by itself, have very little weight, but it is possible that by collecting evidence concerning many characteristics and carefully collating it we may reach conclusions that will have a reasonable degree of certainty. Several years ago I made a study of one such characteristic; the results are set forth in an article, *Repetition and Parallelism in the Earlier Elizabethan Drama*;<sup>2</sup> in the present paper I propose to examine another characteristic, a certain type of blank verse line, and indi-

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare Studies by Members of the Department of English of the University of Wisconsin*, Madison, 1916, pp. 31-35. Cf. Schröer, *Ueber Titus Andronicus*, pp. 67 f., 75 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xx, pp. 360-379.

cate its bearing on some of the problems of authorship and chronology.

It should be borne in mind that when we speak of the style of any one of the group of dramatists called the predecessors of Shakespeare the term does not imply definite and unvarying characteristics for all his plays. The development of dramatic writing proceeds with wonderful rapidity in the years in which these dramatists wrote, and this is reflected very plainly in their work; the style is constantly changing, and general statements with regard to it will usually hold good for not more than two plays, in some cases for not more than one play.<sup>3</sup>

I pass now to a description of the type of line to be considered. Many readers of *Tamburlaine* have probably noticed the rather frequent occurrence in that play of lines constructed on the model of the following:

The fainting army of that foolish king

I *Tamb.* II, iii, ll. 660.<sup>4</sup>

The naked action of my threatened end

I *Tamb.* III, ii, ll. 1079.

The golden statue of their feathered bird

I *Tamb.* IV, ii, ll. 1549.

A line of this type consists of two symmetrical parts joined by a preposition or conjunction. Each part consists of an article or some other pronominal word, followed by an adjective, which is in turn followed by a noun; this may be formulated, *pronominal word* plus *adjective* plus *noun*. The pronominal word may sometimes be wanting or may be replaced by some other part of speech, without changing the characteristic structure.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Shakespeare Studies*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, edited by C. F. Tucker Brooke, Oxford, 1910.



The *savage* captain of a *savage* crew

*Locrine*, I, i, 134.<sup>7</sup>

For *common* cause of this our *common* weal

*Jocasta*, III, i, 54.<sup>8</sup>

In six cases positive and negative adjectives emphasize the antithesis.

A *quiet* end of her *unquiet* state

*Jocasta*, IV, iii, 56.

Thou *trusty* guide of my so *trustless* steps

*Jocasta*, III, i, 1.

The cases of antithetical construction are scattered among a large number of plays. In only one play are there enough of them to give the effect of a characteristic of style. In *Jocasta*, by Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, there are eight examples; six of these have positive and negative adjectives, and one has the adjective repeated. All of the examples, with one exception, are found in the part of the play (Acts II, III, V) written by Gascoigne; the exception, IV, iii, 56 (quoted above) is substantially a repetition of III, ii, 16.<sup>9</sup>

Lines of the general type discussed above (p. 69) are found in the earlier non-dramatic blank verse, but their occurrence is comparatively rare. I have examined all the non-dramatic blank verse before 1585, with the exception of two pieces;<sup>10</sup> in only two cases has more than one example been found. In Surrey's translation of the second and fourth books of the *Æneid* there are seven examples (*and* 2, *of* 2, other prepositions 3), all in the

<sup>7</sup> The *Shakespeare Apocrypha*, edited by C. F. Tucker Brooke, Oxford, 1908.

<sup>8</sup> *Supposes and Jocasta*, edited by John W. Cunliffe, Boston, 1906.

<sup>9</sup> "Brings quiet end to this unquiet life."

<sup>10</sup> Turberville's *Heroical Epistles of Ovid*, and the 170 lines in Barnabe Rich's *Don Simonides*. Cf. A. Schröder, *Ueber die Anfänge des Blankverses in England*, *Anglia*, IV, pp. 5-9.

second book. In Spenser's blank verse "sonets," in Van Noodt's *Theatre*, 1569, there are six examples (of 4, other prepositions 2).

#### THE ENGLISH SENECA PLAYS

Connective	<i>and</i>	<i>of</i>	Other prepo- sitions	Total
<i>Gorboduc</i> .....	10	32	17	59
<i>Jocasta</i> .....	2	21	12	35
<i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> .....	5	8	2	15
<i>Misfortunes of Arthur</i> .....	4	5	0	9
<i>Wounds of Civil War</i> .....	9	21	7	37
<i>Tamcred and Gismunda</i> .....	2	8	4	14
<i>Lochrine</i> .....	2	21	0	23
<i>Selimus</i> .....	4	7	2	13
<i>Titus Andronicus</i> .....	5	4	6	15

In the Senecan Plays, with a single exception,<sup>11</sup> the occurrence of these symmetrical lines is a fairly well marked characteristic. Considered with respect to this characteristic, the plays fall into two groups. *Gorboduc*, *Jocasta*, *The Wounds of Civil War*, and *Lochrine* have a large number of examples; *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Tamcred and Gismunda*, *Selimus*, and *Titus Andronicus* have a smaller number of examples, but more than other plays that do not show Senecan characteristics.<sup>12</sup> Some of the Senecan plays call for more special notice.

#### *Gorboduc*

In the first English tragedy the number of these lines (59) is greater than that found in any tragedy of later date. Other early tragedies with a large number are *Jocasta*, 35, *Tamburlaine I*, 44, *Tamburlaine II*, 32, *Wounds of Civil War*, 37. *Gorboduc* is the joint production of

<sup>11</sup> *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, with nine cases.

<sup>12</sup> *Tamburlaine* is, of course, an exception to this statement.

Sackville and Norton; Acts I, II, and III are by Norton, Acts IV and V by Sackville. An examination of the distribution of these lines between the two authors shows that Norton uses them more than twice as often as Sackville.<sup>13</sup> It is further noticeable that Sackville has no lines with *and* as the connective.

### *Jocasta*

The facts concerning the joint authorship of this play have been stated above (p. 71). The number of symmetrical lines in the play is 35; of these 19 are in the part written by Gascoigne and 16 in that written by Kinwelmersh. The percentage, however, is twice as great for Kinwelmersh as for Gascoigne. Kinwelmersh seems to be especially fond of the type with the connective *of*; his percentage of these lines is three times as great as that of Gascoigne. I have already called attention to Gascoigne's fondness for antithesis.<sup>14</sup>

*Locrine*, a play of the extreme Senecan type, rich in all manner of florid rhetorical ornament, has 23 cases of symmetrical lines. Some scholars hold that this play is the work of Peele.<sup>15</sup> The play of Peele's that is nearest to *Locrine* in form and subject is *The Battle of Alcazar*, but in this play the number of cases is only 12. There is, then, nothing here to support the contention that Peele is the author of *Locrine*; the evidence is rather against it. I have shown in another place<sup>16</sup> that the evidence from a comparison of the plays with respect to repetition and parallelism is of the same nature.

<sup>13</sup> In Norton's part the percentage is about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; in Sackville's it is 2 per cent.

<sup>14</sup> See p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> See W. S. Gaud, *Modern Philology*, I, pp. 409-422; F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, II, p. 404.

<sup>16</sup> *Pub. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XX, p. 347.

*Selimus*, a play showing characteristics of both *Tamburlaine* and the Senecan plays, has 13 examples, about half as many as *Locrine* shows. Grosart<sup>17</sup> has attempted to show that *Selimus* is the work of Greene. The only play of Greene's that uses the symmetrical line to any extent is *Alphonsus of Arragon*, with 16 examples. With respect, then, to this characteristic there is likeness between the plays.

*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, as noted above, has but a small number (9) of these lines. This is noticeable, because the play has the general Senecan characteristics in a very marked degree.

Lodge's Senecan play, *The Wounds of Civil War*, shows a large number (37) of symmetrical lines. This is in striking contrast with *A Looking Glass for London and England*, in which Lodge collaborated with Greene; here only one example is found.

## MARLOWE

Connective	and	of	Other prepo- sitions	Total
<i>Tamburlaine I</i> .....	14	19	11	44
<i>Tamburlaine II</i> .....	5	24	3	32
<i>Faustus</i> .....	3	5	0	8
<i>Jew of Malta</i> .....	0	3	0	3
<i>Edward II</i> .....	0	1	3	4
<i>Massacre at Paris</i> .....	0	2	3	5
<i>Dido</i> .....	2	0	3	5

The *First Part of Tamburlaine* has more examples (44) of these symmetrical lines than any play examined except *Gorboduc*. That Marlowe was fond of this rhetorical form when he wrote the play is shown not only by this large number of lines, but also by the variety of connectives that he used. In the *Second Part of Tamburlaine*

<sup>17</sup> *Huth Library, Greene's Works. Temple Dramatists, Selimus.*



the number of examples (32) is smaller; and it is to be noticed further that three-fourths of these have the connective *of*, in sharp contract with the variety of connectives noted in the *First Part*.

In other plays of Marlowe such lines are rather rare,—*Faustus* 8, *Jew of Malta* 3, *Edward II* 4, *Massacre at Paris* 5, *Dido* 5. This fact probably indicates nothing more than that this was one of many rather artificial rhetorical forms used in *Tamburlaine* and abandoned in the later plays. It is a good illustration of what was said above<sup>18</sup> concerning the changing style of these dramatists, and shows plainly that we have here to do with a characteristic of Marlowe's *earlier* style. Marlowe shows nearly twice as many examples as any other of the predecessors of Shakespeare.<sup>19</sup>

## KYD

Connective	<i>and</i>	<i>of</i>	Other prepo- sitions	Total
<i>Spanish Tragedy</i> .....	5	8	2	15
<i>Cornelia</i> .....	3	3	4	10
<i>Soliman and Perseda</i> .....	0	4	1	5
[ <i>Jeronimo</i> ] .....	0	3	2	5

Of the plays with which Kyd's name is connected, the *Spanish Tragedy* is the only one that has more than a small number of examples. The *First Part of Jeronimo* has only five examples, as against fifteen in the *Spanish Tragedy*. This may be regarded as a small grain of corroborative evidence in favor of the contention of those who hold that *The First Part of Jeronimo* was not written by Kyd.<sup>20</sup> It will be noticed that in respect to this

<sup>18</sup> See p. 69.      <sup>19</sup> Marlowe 101, Peele 58, Greene 40, Kyd 35.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Boas, *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, Introduction, pp. xxxix-xliv; Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature*, I, pp. 308-9. Thorndike, *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xvii, pp. 143-4.

characteristic *The Spanish Tragedy* is in sharp contrast with *Tamburlaine*; this fact may be interpreted as evidence of its independence of Marlowe's play.

## GREENE

Connective	and	of	Other prepo- sitions	Total
<i>Alphonsus of Arragon</i> .....	5	7	4	16
<i>Orlando Furioso</i> .....	0	2	3	5
<i>Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay</i> ..	0	6	1	7
<i>James IV</i> .....	5	2	3	10
<i>Looking Glass for London and England</i> .....	0	0	1	1
<i>Pinner of Wakefield</i> .....	0	0	1	1

In Greene's plays examples are rare, except in *Alphonsus of Arragon*, where there are sixteen. This larger number in *Alphonsus of Arragon* is probably due to the strong influence of *Tamburlaine* upon that play.<sup>21</sup> The number of examples in Greene's other plays is insignificant.

## PEELE

Connective	and	of	Other prepo- sitions	Total
<i>Arraignment of Paris</i> .....	0	4	2	6
<i>Battle of Alcazar</i> .....	1	7	4	12
<i>Edward I</i> .....	1	5	3	9
<i>David and Bethsabe</i> .....	6	20	3	29
<i>Old Wives' Tale</i> .....	0	2	0	2

The most noticeable point in Peele's use of these symmetrical lines is the very large number (29) in *David and Bethsabe* as compared with the number in his other plays. It is possible that this comparatively large number of examples in *David and Bethsabe* may help to fix its date. The play was printed in 1599, after Peele's death.

<sup>21</sup> See Hübener, *Der Einfluss von Marlowe's Tamburlaine auf die zeitgenössischen und folgenden Dramatiker*, Halle, 1901, pp. 5-15.

Most authorities make no attempt to date its composition, and of those that give a date only one, Fleay, gives a reason for the date assigned. Bullen says, "the date of its composition is unknown."<sup>22</sup> Fleay (*Chronicle History*, II, p. 153) says, "May fairly be dated c. 1588. The situations in the play are strikingly suggestive of Elizabeth and Leicester as David and Bathsheba, Uriah as Leicester's first wife and Absalom as Mary Queen of Scots. The disguise of political allusions by change of sex was not unknown to the early stage." Oliphant Smeaton in the introduction to his edition of *The Arraignment of Paris* (*Temple Dramatists*)<sup>23</sup> follows Fleay. Ward<sup>24</sup> rejects Fleay's idea of political allusions in the play, but suggests no date.<sup>25</sup> "The diction of the play," he says, "is suggestive of mature workmanship." Gummere<sup>26</sup> has nothing to say concerning the date. Schelling<sup>27</sup> says, "perhaps written as early as 1589," but gives no ground for this conjecture. W. S. Gaud<sup>28</sup> says, "Peele's *Arraignment of Paris* was published in 1584. *David and Bethsabe*, published in 1599, was probably written next." We have, then, two dates assigned to the play, 1588, 1589. The only ground given for either date is the wild conjecture of Fleay noted above.

Let us consider now whether the large number of symmetrical lines in the play may have any significance as evidence for determining the date. The large number of such lines in *Tamburlaine* would lead us to expect to

<sup>22</sup> A. H. Bullen, *The Works of George Peele*, London, 1888, Introduction, p. xli.

<sup>23</sup> Pp. x-xi.

<sup>24</sup> *History of English Dramatic Literature*, I, pp. 376-7.

<sup>25</sup> "The date of its composition is unknown."

<sup>26</sup> C. M. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, I, pp. 335-341.

<sup>27</sup> F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, 1908, I, p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> *Modern Philology*, I, p. 410, n. 2.

find them in later plays related to it in style and manner. This we have seen to be the case in Greene's *Alphonsus of Arragon*. Now the play of Peele's that is nearest in style and manner to *Tamburlaine* is *The Battle of Alcazar* and after that *Edward I*, but these plays do not show this characteristic so strongly as does *David and Bethsabe*,<sup>29</sup> which is not in the manner of *Tamburlaine*. It is, therefore, a fair inference that *David and Bethsabe* is nearer to the date of *Tamburlaine* than either of the other plays. Now *The Battle of Alcazar* was played at least as early as 1592, possibly as early as 1589.<sup>30</sup> The date of *Edward I* (printed 1593) is undetermined, but it is, no doubt, close to that of *The Battle of Alcazar*. If, then, *David and Bethsabe* is nearer to *Tamburlaine* than either of the other plays, its date must be about 1588 or 1589. It must be admitted that this is very slight evidence upon which to determine the date of the play; slight as it is, however, I think that it may be called stronger than any other evidence yet brought forward.

## SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORICAL PLAYS

Connective	and	of	Other prepo- sitions	Total
<i>Richard III</i> .....	8	23	4	35
<i>Richard II</i> .....	10	22	8	40
<i>King John</i> .....	8	26	6	40
<i>I Henry IV</i> .....	7	6	2	15
<i>II Henry IV</i> .....	2	4	4	10
<i>Henry V</i> .....	4	2	4	10
<i>I Henry VI</i> .....	0	9	2	11
<i>II Henry VI</i> .....	1	7	2	10
<i>III Henry VI</i> .....	0	2	1	3
[ <i>Contention</i> ] .....	0	2	2	4
[ <i>True Tragedy</i> ].....	2	1	2	5

<sup>29</sup> *David and Bethsabe*, 29; *The Battle of Alcazar*, 12; *Edward I*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Bullen, *The Works of George Peele*, I, Introd., p. xxxvii; *The Battle of Alcazar*, Malone Society Reprint, Introd., p. v.

With respect to the use of the symmetrical lines, the historical plays of Shakespeare whose authorship is well established fall into two very distinct groups. *Richard III*, *Richard II*, and *King John* have these lines in great abundance; in this respect, in fact, they are surpassed by only *Tamburlaine*, *Gorboduc*, and *The Wounds of Civil War*.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, *I Henry IV*, *II Henry IV*, and *Henry V* show a comparatively small number. The use of symmetrical lines, then, is a strongly marked characteristic of Shakespeare's earlier historical plays.

It remains to consider the three parts of *Henry VI*. Without entering into the bewildering mazes of the question of the authorship of these plays, one may venture a brief statement of the case. First, there is fairly general agreement that Shakespeare did not write the *First Part*; second, the *Second Part* is a revision and enlargement of an earlier play, *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, and the *Third Part* a revision of an earlier play, *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*; third, the relation of the two earlier to the two later plays is a matter of much dispute; fourth, over the question of the authorship of both the earlier and later plays there goes on an apparently interminable conflict of Shakespeare scholars. Peele, Greene, and Marlowe are the playwrights who are held to have shared with Shakespeare the authorship of these plays, or to have produced them without his collaboration, working either separately or jointly in various combinations. To the solution of this vexed question the present investigation may perhaps contribute a small bit of significant evidence.

It has been shown above that the use of symmetrical

<sup>31</sup> See pp. 72, 74.

lines is a strongly marked characteristic of Shakespeare's earlier historical plays. Now, in this respect, the three parts of *Henry VI* show a striking difference from *Richard III*, *Richard II*, and *King John*. The three latter plays have respectively 35, 40, and 40 cases; the three parts of *Henry VI* have respectively 11, 10, and 3 cases. In this respect also the second and third parts of *Henry VI* agree with *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy*, which have respectively 4 and 5 cases. The second and third parts of *Henry VI*, then, and the two earlier plays (*Contention*, *True Tragedy*) differ in a striking manner from the earlier historical plays of Shakespeare with respect to this characteristic; they agree, however, in this respect, with the later plays of Peele, Greene, and Marlowe.<sup>32</sup> Our bit of evidence, then, shows that these four plays (*II Henry VI*, *III Henry VI*, *Contention*, *True Tragedy*) are closer to the style of the later plays of Peele, Greene, and Marlowe than to the earlier historical plays of Shakespeare. Just how significant this evidence may be, must be left to the judgment of those who are especially familiar with all the aspects of this long disputed question.

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. tables, pp. 74, 76.